

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 HA-05 CA-01 /077 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2263

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 1305

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, GH

SUBJ: MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE CIA

REF: ACCRA 1156; STATE 038505

1. SUMMARY: COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLI ASSURED ME AGAIN ON FEBRUARY 15 THAT RECENT SPATE OF ALLEGATIONS IN THE MEDIA ABOUT CIA INTERVENTION IN GHANA DID NOT REPEAT NOT REPRESENT GOG POLICY OR VIEWS OF HIMSELF OR CHAIRMAN ACHEAMPONG. HE THOUGHT OUR RELATIONS WERE "FIRST CLASS", WANTED TO KEEP THEM THAT WAY AND SAID HE HAD TALKED TO EDITOR RESPONSIBLE ON PREVIOUS EVENING AND COMPLAINED TO HIM OF RECENT ATTACKS ON US. END SUMMARY.

2. HAVING BEEN ALERTED BY HIS SENIOR PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, ERIC OTOO, THAT I WOULD PROBABLY BE SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH HIM THIS WEEK TO COMPLAIN OF RECENT MEDIA ALLEGATIONS OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IN GHANA'S DOMESTIC POLITICS, COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLI ASKED ME TO COME IN MORNING FEBRUARY 15 OSTENSIBLY ON ANOTHER SUBJECT
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(SEPTTEL). HE IMMEDIATELY BEGAN CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, BY REFERRING TO RECENT MEDIA ATTACK AND ASSURING ME AGAIN THAT RECENT ALLEGATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN GHANAIAN TIMES, DID NOT REPEAT NOT IN ANY WAY REPRESENT GOG VIEWS OR POLICY. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH CHAIRMAN ACHEAMPONG AND COMMISSIONER OF INFORMATION YARNEY ON PREVIOUS DAY AND EMPHASIZED THAT ALL OF THEM RECOGNIZED THAT THERE

WAS NO TRUTH IN CHARGES OF US INTERFERENCE IN GHANA. EDITORIALS EXPRESSED ONLY THE VIEW OF THE PAPER ITSELF, AND EVEN THOUGH GOG OWNED THE GHANAIAI TIMES AND FROM TIME TO TIME OFFERED "ADVICE" TO EDITORS, EDITORIALS THEMSELVES WERE NOT DRAFTED OR APPROVED BY GOG, NOR WERE THEY CENSORED OR EDITED IN ANY WAY. HE SAID HE HAD TAKEN GHANAIAI TIMES EDITOR GYAWU-KYEM TO TASK ON THE PREVIOUS EVENING FOR THESE ATTACKS, INFORMING HIM THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS MADE FELLI'S TASK OF FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

3. I SAID THAT I WAS VERY GLAD TO HAVE THESE ASSURANCES, THAT WE ARE PLEASED THAT GHANA WANTS TO CONTINUE ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH US AND THAT WE HOPED HE WOULD CONTINUE TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO FRUSTRATE THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WHO WANT TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. I ADDED THAT HIS ASSURANCES MIGHT HELP REMOVE A POSSIBLE IRRITANT WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE MARRED THE ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON OF ALEX QUAISON-SACKKEY, GHANA'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES. (QUAISON-SACKKEY LEFT GHANA EVENING FEBRUARY 15 AND EXPECTS TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 21.) I ALSO MENTIONED THAT RECENT MEDIA ATTACKS CAN CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY WHICH COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS, AS IN THE CASE OF ONE AMCIT NOW BEING HELD BY SPECIAL BRANCH (ACCRA 1261). FELLI NODDED IN AGREEMENT, EXPRESSED REGRET OVER INCIDENT AND SAID HE EXPECTED AMCIT WOULD BE RELEASED SOON.
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4. COMMENT: FELLI WAS AS WARM AND AFFABLE AS USUAL AND, I BELIEVE, SINCERE IN HIS ASSURANCES ABOUT MEDIA ATTACKS. I THINK IT IS TRUE THAT BOTH HE AND HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG DO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO CONTINUING GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WE ALSO HAVE IMPRESSION FROM SOME OF HIS SUB-ORDINATES THAT HE IS OFTEN VISIBLY ANNOYED BY ANTICS OF GYAWU-KYEM IN HIS EDITORIALS. AT SAME TIME, FELLI DID NOT ASSURE ME THAT ATTACKS WOULD ENTIRELY STOP AND WE DOUBT THAT THEY WILL. WE CAN EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY MAY WELL BE LESS FREQUENT AND VITRIOLIC IN TONE. ALTHOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CHAIRMAN WILL STOP SHORT OF SQUELCHING GYAWU-KYEM ENTIRELY, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF HIS VALUE TO HIM DURING THE COMING WEEKS BEFORE THE MARCH 30 REFERENDUM. IN SHORT, GYAWU-KYEM WILL REMAIN AN IRRITANT BUT WILL NOT, IN OUR VIEW, AFFECT OUR BASICALLY CORDIAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS. WE AND THE BRITISH HAVE TAKEN PAINS TO POINT OUT PRIVATELY TO MANY KEY GHANAIAIS THE SOVIET SOURCE OF GYAWU-KYEM'S FEBRUARY 4 EDITORIAL, AND VIRTUALLY ALL OF OUR FRIENDS AND GHANAIAI CONTACTS HAVE TAKEN THE SAME LINE AS FELLI. WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT FELLI'S ASSURANCES BUT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR GYAWU-KYEM'S

ACTIVITIES CLOSELY.

5. FELLI WAS OBVIOUSLY DISTURBED AS WELL BY ARREST OF AMCIT AND SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH CHAIRMAN ON PREVIOUS DAY. HE ATTRIBUTED ARREST TO HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITIES OF SECURITY FORCES DURING TIME OF CURRENT POLITICAL UNREST AND TO WOEFULLY INADEQUATE COORDINATION WITHIN GOG. (MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAD APPROVED QUESTIONNAIRE AMCIT WAS CIRCULATING TO JOURNALISTS, BUT PROJECT HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH MFA OR OTHER AGENCIES. NEEDLESS TO SAY, EMBASSY WAS ALSO UNAWARE OF THIS PRIVATE RESEARCH PROJECT.) SENSITIVITIES TO WHICH FELLI REFERRED ARE CERTAINLY PRESENT AND WILL NOT DECLINE BEFORE MARCH 30 REFERENDUM AND IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH. WE THEREFORE SUGGEST DEPARTMENT, AID AND USIA ADVISE ANY
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WOULD-BE RESEARCHERS OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS THEY WILL FACE IN GHANA DURING NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS. SMITH

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